

Your Honor,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to talk about my friend, Brandon Russell. I've known Brandon for nearly a decade now, and in that time, I couldn't have asked for a more loyal, honest, and trustworthy friend. Brandon has always been there for me, and for all of our mutual friends, through thick and thin, and we've repaid that by doing the same for him.

Brandon is possibly the funniest, smartest, and most kind-hearted person that I've ever known. Always quick with a joke, and always eager to laugh, he brightens up every room and every environment that he's in. As a scientifically-minded person, he is equally able to discuss physics or philosophy in turn, and some of his insights in those (and other) subjects have increased my understanding of the world. His love for animals is well-known, and he became a vegetarian out of a moral conviction that eating other living creatures should be avoided at all costs.

Brandon is one of the best friends that I've ever had, and even throughout his most recent incarceration, we've spent countless hours on the phone, discussing a nearly endless range of subjects. He's a really great person, and an even better friend, and every second that he spends in jail or prison over a plot that, by the government's own admission, he had minor (at most) involvement in is a tragedy.

Brandon's type of politics may differ from your own, or from those of most people, but he is at heart an idealist, and idealism has always been seen as a great virtue. Please, do not take his worldview, however controversial it may be, into account when deciding on his sentence. Prior to his arrest, he was attending trade school, working, and enjoying his life - if unfettered by incarceration, he would've certainly been a productive member of society. Instead, now, an intelligent, honest, and hardworking young man may spend the best years of his life locked in a cell. I ask you, if you can, to limit the amount of time that he spends away from his friends, family, and community to the absolute minimum.

So, I respectfully ask you to give Brandon the minimum possible sentence.

Regards,
Ryan T. Hatfield